

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 3127

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to education.

Brief Description: Regarding the center for the improvement of student learning.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Santos, Hasegawa, McCoy, P. Sullivan, McDermott, Upthegrove, Pettigrew and Morrell).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/26/06, 2/2/06 [DP];

Appropriations: 2/4/06 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/13/06, 57-41.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 3/2/06, 28-15.

House Refused to Concur.

Senate Receded.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 3/8/06, 27-21.

House Concurred.

Passed House: 3/8/06, 60-38

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Reactivates the Center for Improvement of Student Learning within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Creates an Education Ombudsman within the Office of the Governor and, if sufficient funds are provided, authorizes the ombudsman to contract with other entities to serve as regional ombudsmen.
- Requires an annual report on use of the ombudsman's services, methods to increase family and community involvement in education, and strategies to improve educational opportunities for all students in the state.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Santos and Wallace.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Priest, Shabro and Tom.

Staff: Sarah Ream (786-7303).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Clements, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Dunshee, Grant, Haigh, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Linville, McDermott, Miloscia, Schual-Berke, P. Sullivan and Walsh.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Bailey, Buri, Chandler, Hinkle, Pearson, Priest and Talcott.

Staff: Charlie Gavigan (786-7340).

Background:

Establishment of the Center for Improvement of Student Learning (CISL)

In 1993, as part of education reform, the Legislature created the CISL under the auspices of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The Legislature directed the CISL to serve as an education information clearinghouse. The Legislature also created a non-appropriated account that was to be used for any gifts, grants, or endowments for the CISL. In 1996, the Legislature expanded the CISL's role to include providing best practices research on programs and practices to improving reading instruction.

CISL's Funding History

When the CISL was created in 1993, the Legislature appropriated \$400,000 from the State General Fund for the 1993-95 biennium to support its operations. An additional \$500,000 was appropriated in the 1994 supplemental budget. For each of the 1995-97, 1997-99, and 1999-01 biennia, the CISL received a dedicated appropriation of \$1.26 million. Each budget proviso stated that the funds were provided for technical assistance related to education reform through the OSPI, in consultation with the CISL.

In the 2001-03 biennial budget, the Legislature ceased providing dedicated funding for the CISL.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill:

The Center for Improvement of Student Learning (CISL)

If funds are appropriated for this purpose, the CISL is reactivated within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

The CISL is directed to: (1) serve as an information clearinghouse, including maintaining a website; (2) provide best practices research and advice; (3) help inform educators regarding school boards' powers; (4) provide training and consultation services; (5) identify strategies to improve success rates of students in certain ethnic and racial groups; and (6) establish a model procedure to notify parents when students have not attended class or missed a day of school. The CISL may contract with others to help provide these services. The OSPI must report to the Legislature biennially regarding the CISL, beginning September 1, 2007.

Creation of the Education Ombudsman's Office

The Office of Education Ombudsman is created within the Office of the Governor. The ombudsman must be qualified in public education law and policy, dispute resolution, and community outreach. Before appointing an ombudsman, the Governor must share information about the appointment with a six-person legislative committee. If sufficient funds are provided, the ombudsman can delegate and certify regional ombudsmen.

The duties of the ombudsman include providing information to the public regarding the public education system; developing parent involvement materials; identifying obstacles to greater parent and community involvement in schools; identifying strategies for improving success for student groups with disproportionate academic achievement; and referring or facilitating the resolution of complaints. The ombudsman will consult with various organizations and group in the conduct of its work.

The ombudsman and regional education ombudsmen will not be liable for acts associated with the good faith performance of the ombudsman's duties. The ombudsman must keep all matters under investigation confidential, except as necessary to perform the ombudsman's duties.

Annually, beginning September 1, 2007, the ombudsman will advise and make recommendations to the Legislature, Governor, and State Board of Education regarding use of the ombudsman's office, methods to increase community involvement, and ways to improve educational opportunities for all students.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed; however, section 2 which reactivates the CISL is null and void unless funding is provided by June 30, 2006.

Testimony For: (Education) This bill reintroduces a key piece of education reform the Center for Improvement of Student Learning (CISL). Reviving the CISL is in line with Washington

Learns. Placing the CISL within the Governor's office provides it with more credibility. The advisory committee will help guide the process and provide communication between policy makers, parents and educators.

Parent involvement is essential to student success. However, not all parents have the same opportunities to be involved with their children's school. The ombudsman's office will provide parents with information and help them more quickly learn how to navigate the educational system. It will also help with statewide networking of parents.

Testimony For: (Appropriations) Families need a place to go for help navigating through the education system. The Center and Education Ombudsman can provide this help. The Center can help parents address anxiety about education reform and can facilitate greater involvement of parents in their children's education.

Testimony Against: (Education) None.

Testimony Against: (Appropriations) While this issue is important, it should be dealt with next year in conjunction with recommendations from Washington Learns and the State Board of Education.

Persons Testifying: (Education) Representative Santos, prime sponsor; Linda Hanson, Parent Washington State Parent Teacher Association; Bev Young Green and Brian Conlin, Washington State Parent Teacher Association; Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition; and Suzi Wright, Tulalip Tribes.

Persons Testifying: (Appropriations) (In support) Mary Kentiela, State PTA; and Donna Overseer, Washington State Special Education Coalition and parent.

(Opposed) Terry Bergeson, Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Education) None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Appropriations) None.